

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY ROME IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 040593

FOR THE AMBASSADOR FROM HARTMAN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, IT, US

SUBJECT: PANORAMA LEAKS EMBASSY DOCUMENTS

REF: ROME 2726 AND 2592

1. WE, AS YOU DO, CONDEMN THE LEAKS OF CONFIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS. THIS DEPLORABLE PRACTICE CAN ONLY INHIBIT OUR OPERATIONAL CAPABILITIES, DO HARM TO OUR OVERALL EFFORTS TO SAY NOTHING OF OUR RELATIONS WITH OTHER NATIONS, AND RAISE SERIOUS DOUBTS IN THE MINDS OF OUR FRIENDS AS TO OUR RELIABILITY AS AN ALLY.

2. AS TO HOW PANORAMA CAME INTO POSSESSION OF THREE CABLES LISTED IN REFTELS, WE ARE NOW CHECKING WITH THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES, THE DEPARTMENT'S HISTORICAL OFFICE AND THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION STAFF. WE WILL INFORM YOU OF OUR FINDINGS.

3. DEPARTMENT AGREES THAT PANORAMA'S MALICIOUS AND SENSATIONAL TREATMENT OF THE STORY AS REPORTED BY THE CONFIDENTIAL

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EMBASSY OR FOR THAT MATTER ANY STORIES OF THIS ILK SHOULD

NOT BE LEFT UNCHALLENGED. WHATEVER THE MOTIVES MAY BE
BEHIND THE LEAKS OF CONFIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS, WITTINGLY OR
UNWITTINGLY THEY HURT OUR FRIENDS AND GIVE COMFORT TO THE

PCI.

4. FOR THIS REASON, DEPARTMENT CONCURS IN THE EMBASSY'S
GENERAL APPROACH (PARA 5, ROME 2726). WE ASSUME BRIEFING
WOULD INCLUDE POINT-BY-POINT ORAL REFUTATION OF FACTUAL
INACCURACIES IN "PANORAMA". HOWEVER, STRONGLY RECOMMEND
EMBASSY NOT RPT NOT SHOW TEXTS OF CABLES IN QUESTION
TO JOURNALISTS SINCE THIS WOULD SET UNFORTUNATE PRECEDENT
OF PUBLICLY CONFIRMING OR DENYING CONTENTS OF CLASSIFIED
MESSAGES, AND WOULD CREATE BASIS FOR FUTURE ASSERTIONS
THAT FAILURE TO PRODUCE CORRECT TEXT TO COUNTER SCURRILOUS
STORIES IN EFFECT CONFIRMS ACCURACY OF SUCH STORIES.

5. DEPARTMENT WELCOMES EMBASSY'S INITIATIVE IN THIS
MATTER AND OF COURSE ENCOURAGES THE EMBASSY TO CONVEY
VIGOROUSLY ON A CONTINUING BASIS THROUGH THE RESPONSIBLE
MEDIA A BALANCED COVERAGE OF THE US AND US-ITALIAN
RELATIONS. INGERSOLL

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